

VZCZCXR05424

RR RUEHMA RUEHPA

DE RUEHUJA #2000 3041117

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

R 311117Z OCT 09

FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7382

INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC

RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC

RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS ABUJA 002000

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/PDPA, DRL/ILCSR, S/CIEA, ECA AND IIP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV KPAO EPET KDEM NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIA OIL POLITICS PUBLIC DIPLOMACY A HUGE SUCCESS

¶1. Summary: Mission Nigeria's Political and Public Affairs

Sections hosted artist, playwright, and former Fulbright Scholar Dan Hoyle to perform his critically acclaimed "Tings Dey Happen" one-man play on oil politics, militancy, and corruption in the Niger Delta. Hoyle performed in five Nigerian cities a unique form of public diplomacy which showcased America's willingness to promote honest and meaningful dialogue on important issues. Nigerian audiences praised Hoyle and the USG for sponsoring the program, which they said opened a new door to understand and contemplate the people and events of the Niger Delta. End Summary.

¶2. PolOff began seeking ways to incorporate a public diplomacy component to POL's anti-corruption campaign that promoted promoting transparency and accountability in Nigeria's oil sector. POL and PAS agreed to host Dan Hoyle, former Fulbright Scholar at the University of Port Harcourt (2005-2006) and fluent pidgin speaker, to perform his one-man show, "Tings Dey Happen," in Nigeria for the first time.

¶3. Using I-bucks, PAS Abuja and Lagos funded Hoyle's performances under the Strategic Speakers Initiative, and worked with Nigerian partners, mostly former International Visitor Leadership Program alumni, to host Hoyle in American Corners, national museums, universities, and community centers in Calabar, Lagos, Bauchi, Jos, and Abuja. Hoyle also conducted theatre workshops for students and others in these cities with the National Museum - Calabar (Calabar), the National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (Lagos), the University of Lagos (Lagos), the Development Exchange Center (Bauchi), the Jos Film Institute (Jos), and the Cyprian Ekwensi Center for the Arts (Abuja).

¶4. To encourage meaningful discussion after the shows, invitations focused on achieving a diverse audience, reaching out to non-traditional Mission contacts. From okada (motorcycle) and taxi drivers to governors and oil industry executives, audiences represented a true cross section of Nigerians. Other invitees included university students, academics, labor union leaders, journalists, former militants, actors, human rights and civil society organizations, anti-corruption activists, and military officials. Hoyle reached another audience through his appearances on two of Nigeria's most popular morning television programs, Channels Television's "Sunrise" show in Lagos and Africa Independent Television's (AIT) "Kakaki" show in Abuja.

¶5. An estimated 1,200 Nigerians attended Hoyle's performances. Reactions ranged from astonishment at his command of several dialects of pidgin to reflective debate during the interactive question and answer sessions. Audiences praised Hoyle for the show's poignancy and ability to honor the people in the Niger Delta by sharing their realities with other Nigerians. One audience member in the northern city of Bauchi told Hoyle that he had "opened up a new door to view, understand, and contemplate the people and events in the Delta, which most of us Nigerians in the north are not aware of." He praised Hoyle for "understanding the realities and complexities of the region more than Nigerians themselves."

¶6. In Calabar, one person said he was "deeply moved how an American can teach us so much about ourselves, and at the same time, teach us about the openness and courage of Americans like Dan, who are

Qabout the openness and courage of Americans like Dan, who are willing to go to the Niger Delta to listen to our story." The performances also elicited frequent praise for the USG for sponsoring the show. At Hoyle's final performance in Abuja, one member of the audience said he "applauds the American Embassy for addressing such important issues through the medium of drama and art."

¶7. Comment: Hoyle's tour coincided with the successful conclusion of the GON's amnesty program for Niger Delta militants, a timely contribution to the national debate on a subject of paramount importance to both the USG and Nigeria. End Comment.

SANDERS